

Connecticut Horse Council

April 2, 2024 Minutes

Meeting called to order at 6:30pm by Laurianne Goulet

PRESENT: Rebecca Harnish, Denise Ciano, Yvette Greenberg, Kowboy Ken Forcier, Gary Rutkauskas, Laurianne Goulet, Cheryl Mastele, Carol Birdsey. Zoom Call: Sue Taricani, Brie Messier

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

RECORDING SECRETARY'S REPORT: Approval of February 6th Meeting Notes

1. Yvette Greenberg
2. Denise Ciano Motion Passed

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: 8 Family, 88 individual. 10 Business, 9 Clubs

TREASURER'S REPORT: Was accepted and placed on file 1. Carol Birdsey 2. Jen Nadeau

FACEBOOK: Working out. Allowing people to join. If they are not CHC members any of their advertising posts do not go up. If something is informational to equestrians but not business related then they are posted.

WEBSITE: Rebecca has and continues to do updates. We are posting highlights of our past meeting notes for members. We will be providing a Zoom Link for those who can't make the meeting physically. We will also be updating our publications and adding information on our HORSE 911 program. She put up the newsletter and will put updates in a month before the next meeting. Also, events that are open to the public.

VOLUNTEER HORSE PATROL REPORT: The 21st Annual Meeting & Open House was held on March 16, 2024 and was well attended. Diane reports that for 2023, we had a total of 4,692 Patrol Hours with 2,477 patrols out on our state parks, forests, town lands, land trusts and private lands. This represents saving the state (that's you and me!) \$117,300 in service for 2023 alone. Our 21 years of volunteer hours total 58,197 Patrol Hours Saving Taxpayers \$1,454,925.00. There were 35 members out on Patrols logging their hours - 16 members had over 100 hours & 10 members had over 50 hours. Recognition Certificates for Patrol Hours were presented to those members who had 50+ & 100+ hours for the year. We are reporting to DEEP through Kim Bradley our hours for 2023 as well as our total hours accumulated for 21 years along with the savings to our taxpayers.

The Tea Cup Raffle brought in \$316.00. The 50/50 Raffle totaled \$220.00. Carol Birdsey won the raffle and returned her half back to the VHP account. Thank you, Carol!!! We received a \$20.00 donation from Sue White, DART Team Director. We sold at cost \$75.50 in VHP shirts and gave out \$30.00 vests free to all our new members for joining.

Our Guest speaker was Durham Animal Rescue Team (DART) spoke on their experiences and training with rescuing large animals from all sorts of accidents and how they work with first responders to get them to safety. CHC is encouraging members to get started on CERT and then to join their district State Animal Response Teams (SART). We are looking for volunteers to search the districts and get contact information regarding CERT training (required before a person can volunteer for SART).

TRAIL REPORTS:

Larkin Bridle Trail: CHC addressed the Selectmen of Southbury, DEEP Western District and the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments requesting a light be placed at the Rte. 67 crossing. An online petition was circulated and had over 500 signatures.

Dirt Bikes and motor cycles have been relentless on the Larkin Bridle trail, especially in the Middlebury and Naugatuck sections, both on state and private lands. Extensive trail damage and road safety hazard are created

when ATV's and Dirt bikes are out on these trails and reports of several people being injured have also been reported. Letters and extensive reporting as to the days, times with graphs from May 2023 – February 2024 was sent to the Middlebury Police Department, Jennifer Mahr - Selectman, Town of Middlebury, DEEP Western District Supervisors (Tammy Talbot and Nathan Hale), DEEP Colonel Chris Lewis - Director of Law Enforcement Environmental Conservation Police and DEEP Greenways and Trails Kimberly Bradley. Letters were also sent to Senators Joan Hartley & Eric Berthel and Representative William Pizzuto.

CHC is requesting that DEEP work with the Middlebury police in securing these illegal vehicles, putting up gates at each crossing and boulders to block access points. The illegal users need to be reported on the DEEP Survey and if possible, pictures of bikes, license plates, and the people without getting caught and causing a confrontation.

Natchaug State Forest- Lost Silver Mine Horse Camp: Matt Quinn contacted Diane regarding the well. It was installed back in and is working. This summer, they will be replacing the solar toilets with cement structures that look like wood. They will also clear out a few more pull through sites.

CHC will hold a trail maintenance day on Saturday, June 1 to replace yellow diamond markers on the 5-, 10- & 15-mile loops. CTRA will host a National Trails Day Ride on Sunday, Some VHP members will be camping there Friday and Saturday night.

Machimoodus / Sunrise SP: We talked with DEEP Supervisor Ray Knoop and again made him aware of the two bridges that were built that are not suitable for horses. He said it had already been done and he was not aware of who built them. We hope to take this up at our Hartford meeting.

Nepaug State Forest: Diane has contacted a member of CHC who lives near the forest and would like to be involved in getting the yellow diamond markers back up in the forest. We will need a current map of the loop trail as the one we have was done over 20 years ago.

Wadsworth Falls SP: The Vortex trail is being used by bikes, hikers trail runners and equestrians. The CHC would like to have the issue resolved regarding that this old overgrown trail that was cleared without permission by DEEP and will possibly be closed. CHC would like to have this multi-use trail kept open to help offset the hundreds of users on the one main trail.

Steep Rock Preserve, Washington Depot – Update: Repairs to the bridge have been completed and it is now open for trucks and horse trailers

Chatfield Hollow areas are closed for repaving and rebuilding the covered bridge.

OUTREACH & EDUCATION:

UConn would like to partner with us on the training of the animal control and work with EAC.

Diane spoke at the Litchfield Hills Driving Club meeting as well as the Newtown Bridle Lands Association

Machimoodus/Sunrise State Park - Spring Fling Sunday, March 17th CT Horse Council Volunteer Horse Patrol members, CTRA & Lower River Valley Horsemen's Club members attended the Friends of Machimoodus State Park Spring Fling. We had 3 horses and a goat there along with a table of information on horses and trail etiquette. The event was well attended.

UPCOMING EVENTS: Members of CHC and the CT Equine Advisory Council (EAC) are working on creating outreach programs educating the trail users on "Share the Trail" etiquette. We have 3 events scheduled. This will be a simple table display and interactions of meet and greet with trail users as they enter the trail system. We are looking for volunteers that may be interested in these programs:

We would like to schedule more “Pop Up” events if we have some volunteers.

Please contact by TEXT: Diane Ciano 203-910-9919 or Danielle Borrelli 203-605-9894 if you can help and/or want to set up at other locations.

“Share the Trail” Courtesy Education Events

Saturday, April 13th - Airline Trail SP: Colchester Dog, Hikers & Horses “Share the Trail” Courtesy Education Event – Meet on the trail at the River Road section - 10a-2p

Saturday, May 4th - Machimoodus / Sunrise SP: Dog, Hikers & Horses “Share the Trail” Courtesy Education Event - 10a-2p

Friday, June 14th - Hurd SP: Dog, Hikers & Horses “Share the Trail” Courtesy Education Event - 5:30PM

DEEP No Child Left Inside – Families in the Parks Programs CHC is asked to bring horses to these events, which has been very rewarding for both sides. We are always looking for volunteers to bring their horses to these events. CHC is asking for volunteers to bring “safe” horses to ensure that the public meets and greets horses while we promote the horse industry. Please contact Diane Ciano if you are planning on bringing your horse. 203-910-9919

DEEP No Child Left Inside Events - Families in the Parks Program:

May 11, 2024 - Family Fishing Day with Fish with CARE @ Gay City State Park in Hebron, CT from 10 am to 3 pm

August 3, 2024 Dinosaur Day at Dinosaur State Park in Rocky Hill, CT 9a-3p

August 9th, 10th and 11th- Perseids Campout with the NCLI, the Last Green Valley and the Friends of Pachaug State Forest

National Trails Day Weekend – June 1 & 2 CHC encourages organizations to hold an equestrian event the first weekend in June to celebrate National Trails Day. This is sponsored by the American Hiking Society – and CHC encourages equestrians to promote their horse events to the public as a friendly reminder that horses are out there on the trails and equestrians are working to maintain and promote trails.

CHC will hold a trail maintenance day on Saturday, June 1 to replace yellow diamond markers on the 5-, 10- & 15-mile loops. CTRA will host a National Trails Day Ride on Sunday, Some VHP members will be camping there Friday and Saturday night.

CT Greenways Council Recognition Awards and NTD Kick -off Event - Friday, May 31st

The event will take place at the Riverfront Recapture in Hartford. The CHC nominated the Horse Council of Granby for an award. They will celebrate its forty-fifth anniversary this year. The organization continues to promote and protect the rights of horse owners in Granby and surrounding towns. Part of the mission is to educate its members and the public about the value of equines in our communities.

HORSE 911 Website Information & ACO & First Responder Training: Need Update Laurianne and Rebecca are working on updating.

LEGISLATION:

EAC Appointment: 5th District: Diane again contacted the office of Senator Bob Duff, Senate Majority Leader for the Fifth District regarding an EAC appointment for Denise Ciano. The office has not gotten back to us. June will be

one year without having him appoint someone to the council, even though we have recommended Denise Ciano for the position. Vevette also contacted her representative to get this position filled.

Raised Bill No. SB 337 AN ACT CONCERNING STREET TAKEOVERS AND THE ILLEGAL USE OF CERTAIN VEHICLES. AN ACT CONCERNING STREET TAKEOVERS AND THE ILLEGAL USE OF CERTAIN VEHICLES. To (1) revise provisions regarding forfeiture of certain illegally used vehicles, (2) authorize municipalities to adopt an ordinance related to street takeovers, (3) establish penalties for driving while a person's license is suspended or revoked due to a violation related to a street takeover, and (4) establish a grant program to provide funds to municipalities to enforce laws related to street takeovers and the illegal use of certain vehicles.

3/27 -Referred to Office of Legislative Research and Office of Fiscal Analysis 04/02/24 5:00 PM (LCO)

Please contact your State Representatives & Senators and ask them to support this bill. Let them know the dangers of public safety not only on the streets but on trails. Let them know that public and private lands are being destroyed by this illegal use of trespassing and there are reported injuries of people riding horses that were frightened by the speeding and reckless driving.

OLD BUSINESS:

DEEP – Hartford Meeting: The meeting date has been set for Monday, April 8th at 11:00 am. We will be meeting with leadership of the Environmental Conservation Branch of DEEP that include the three divisions Forestry, Wildlife Management, State Parks & Land Acquisition to discuss horse camps, parking areas, signs, “passive recreation”, etc.

NEW BUSINESS: Diane presented a list Goals she would like to have done and ask our membership if they can help. She will also check into pricing out professionally done CHC Brochure in color

CHC Goals - *Can you help?*

- Unite the equestrian community through education and expand volunteers to help fulfil the vision of the Connecticut Horse Council, Inc. to be recognized as the leader in all issues concerning the Connecticut horse industry.
- Increase our individual membership of equestrians throughout the state.
- Increase education of equestrians to promote the horse industry, get involved with community services, promote horses on trails
- Increase the CHC Volunteer horse Patrol program with members throughout the state. Join the CHC-VHP and be a part of promoting equestrian use on trails while providing a community service while having fun and riding your horse!
- Restore our Horse 911 program again. This is our educational information on fire prevention, how to prepare for a disaster, horse emergency help (CHC Connections), restart training for ACO's, firemen and other emergency response teams around the state on how to handle horses in emergency situations.
- Encourage members to get involved with Animal Rescue Training – Join up with SART & DART. CERT is a requirement first step for members to learn the principles and practices of the Incident Command System (ICS). CERT Classes are held locally. Contact your emergency management person of your town or nearby towns for trainings.

- CT Greenways Council

CHC is looking for someone to be appointed from the governor to this council, as Stacey Stearns would like to “retire” from her 8 years of service.

The CT Greenways Council meetings are open to the public. The Council meets at 9:00 am on the 2nd Tuesday of each month (*except August, and December*) virtually and/or at the offices of VHB, Inc. located at 100 Great Meadow Road Suite 200, in Wethersfield

- Legislation:

CHC is looking for people to volunteer to contribute to our CHC Legislative Committee. We need individuals to look for upcoming legislation that may affect the equine industry and then would notify CHC of the bill # and its contents, so that we can pass this on to our membership.

- CHC Brochures & Publications: Can you help in distributing our publications and or creating educational events on these subjects?

CT Horse Council

Road Safety

Share the Trail

Volunteer Horse Patrol

Other: Sue Taricani is still waiting for information about the Search & Rescue and will check with Dart.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

CHC Meeting Dates: June 4, Oct, 1, Dec. 3 @6:30pm

CT Equine Advisory June 20th, September 26th, December 19th

Eversource Community Room, 107 Selden Street, Berlin The public is welcome.

Adjourned at 7:30pm 1. Vevette Greenberg 2nd Carol Birdsey

Respectfully submitted

Carol Birdsey

Recording Secretary